



Settling Into The Chair

Andy Murray is the new chair of ScotSAC. In this article he updates members on recent events and looks forward to a busy year for the club ...

HERE WE ARE in mid-summer with plenty diving taking place around the country. My first few months as chair of ScotSAC have been lively. Shortly after the AGM, we welcomed Sharon McKenzie as our new administrator to ScotSAC headquarters. Together, Sharon and Hazel process membership, communication, finances and many other aspects of the club. You can read about the latest news from Sharon and Hazel at the foot of this page.

Unfortunately in April, Kevin Miller resigned from his role as National Diving Officer. On behalf of the board and our members, I'd like to thank Kevin for his work over the last two years and wish him well for the future. My appointment as chair also left my previous role as secretary vacant and one other position on the Board remained vacant at the AGM.

This gave us the opportunity to advertise for volunteers to get involved. The role descriptions developed in 2006 helped define the responsibilities of each role, and outline the skills required of volunteers. Volunteers are central to fulfilling our plans and the needs of our members, so if you would like to get involved on some of our national projects, then please get in touch.

Talking of volunteers, in the last issue of **SCOTTISH DIVER** we announced details of the Suunto Diver Award; an award to recognise individuals with significant contribution to our sport. The closing date for nominations is August 31, so if you haven't already, then please consider those in your club who have dedicated time to the development of the sport through ScotSAC. The award is sponsored by Suunto, and all winners will receive a D6 dive computer worth almost £600. Full details are on our website.

Plans are now well underway for this year's dive conference. Last

year's conference was a great success and we are returning to Oban High School again this year.

Watch out on the website for further details as they are confirmed, but don't forget to keep Saturday, November 15 free in your diary!

In May, we implemented a new membership database allowing full implementation of electronic communications. Strong communications is vital across our organisation and thanks to all the members who validated their email records. We now have email addresses for over 60% of our members. Providing we have a valid email address, Members will receive an automatic email notifying of membership renewal, and further email notification when your membership has been processed or referred to our medical advisor. All branches will now also receive automatic branch lists. If you have feedback on the new database, please let us know.

This year, we are embarking on the Equity Standard - A Framework for Sport. This not only forms a requirement of our funding from **sportscotland** but is important in understanding the profile and needs of our membership and identifying target groups for growing membership. The Board have already received training from **sportscotland** and more information will be communicated in the next issue of **SCOTTISH DIVER**.



Recently elected ScotSAC chair Andy Murray

In recent months, the Board has responded to a number of consultations on behalf of ScotSAC, including the Glasgow 2014 legacy, Scottish Marine Historic Environment Policy; and proposals for a no take zone in Lamlash bay.

Last autumn we consulted with members on the future of our headquarters premises, following indications from our landlord that they may be unable to renew our lease. We have now secured a lease extension until May 2009, and will relocate our headquarters to a new location near this time.

Don't forget to keep up to date with all our news on www.scotsac.com and watch out for the launch of our new website this summer.

I hope all our members are enjoying a good summer of diving.

Andy Murray
Chairman

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A Message From HQ

HELLO AND welcome from both Hazel and Sharon at the ScotSAC Headquarters. We are now open for business Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm for all your membership needs.

We both work part time, with Sharon working Tuesday to Thursday and Hazel working Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This means that if you telephone, email or call in on a Wednesday we will both be available to help. All we ask is that you give us a call when coming into headquarters so we know to expect you.

Sharon joined in late March and came to us from the social care sector. Sharon brings a knowledge and understanding of voluntary organisations, and has been thrown into the deep end (no pun intended!) learning all the intricacies of diving and all the little quirks and habits that divers tend to have!

Hazel started back in November 2006 and has been busy running the office solo since May 2007, and was relieved and happy to have an ally and colleague in the office.

You might not have noticed too many outward changes yet but the last year or so have seen some major changes in the running of the office. We have implemented the Sage accounting system and we have been working with an expert

resource from **sportscotland** on getting this up to date. This has replaced the old-fashioned manual ledgers and frees up time to concentrate on other areas of office activity.

The beginning of May saw the introduction of the new membership database. We are finding using the new database more efficient, allowing us to produce reports and statistics that will be beneficial for the branches as well as the organisation as a whole. The database also vastly improves our ability to communicate electronically with members on membership renewal reminders, meeting minutes, branch lists and other news.

We appreciate all the effort branches put in to keep us up to date with their activities and any changes to their pool times and committees. This helps us keep our records up to date and ensures we can give potential new members accurate information and encourage them to join.

We are aiming to continually improve the turnaround time of renewals and new applications. With the office hours now increased this has proven to be very successful. The new database also allows us to email any members on receipt of their membership forms, this will continue to update you on each stage of your application allowing you to track your application.

As always if you have any queries around an application please do not hesitate to contact us.

We recently updated our notice board at headquarters, with some of the posters being very out of date. The internet site is a great way of displaying any photographs from events however please feel free to send us by post or by email any information you would like put on the notice board at HQ.

We both look forward to working with everyone over the next year. Happy diving!

Hazel McBride & Sharon McKenzie

CONGRATS

Congratulations to Catriona McLean who completed her Sports Diver Award this weekend, 'well done at last' from all at Musselburgh SAC.

Carlisle SAC News - Congratulations go to Jim Cookson & David Haughan on successfully completing their Master Diver assessments in May. Well done both of you and happy diving.

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Changes To Buddy Breathing Ascent Training

AS A RESULT OF of intensive research of diving practices and incidents across a number of UK and worldwide diving organisations, and in response to a number of discussions internal to ScotSAC, the National Diving Council (NDC) has made a recommendation for a change to the training schedule.

The Board has now approved, with immediate effect, to suspend all open water buddy breathing (shared) ascents, at both Sport Diver and Master Diver level until ratification at the next Annual General Meeting in 2009. Furthermore, the carrying of an Alternative Air Source (or equivalent) is to be made mandatory for all Members from the 2009 AGM.

In the latest version of the ScotSAC Qualification Record book, the assessments should now read as follows:

■ **Sport Diver level**

Open Water Assessment 9
From a depth of 15m, conduct assisted ascents using an alternative air source, once as donor and once as recipient. Candidates should perform a suitable safety stop(s) before proceeding to the surface. Care must be taken not to exceed 10m/min on ascent.

■ **Master Diver level**

Open Water Assessment 10
From a depth of 20m, conduct assisted ascents using an alternative air source, once as donor and once as recipient. Candidates should perform a suitable safety stop(s) before proceeding to the surface. Care must be taken not to exceed 10m/min on ascent. Dive Buddy must be of at least Sport Diver Level.

■ **Master Diver level**

Open Water Assessment 11
From a depth of 30m, conduct assisted ascents using an alternative air source, once as donor and once as recipient. Candidates should perform a suitable safety stop(s) before proceeding to the surface. Care must be taken not to exceed 10m/min on ascent. Dive Buddy must be of at least Sport Diver Level.

In addition, the following item shall be added to the Diving Rules listed on page 11:

No Member shall dive without carrying an alternative air source to deliver air to a Buddy in an emergency

Previous editions of the Qualification Record book may differ to the above. Please confirm with your Branch Diving Officer or Regional Coach that you are using the most recent version.

Trainees working towards either Sport or Master Diver Award who have not yet completed the buddy breathing (shared) ascents will not be required to perform these assessments. Branch Diving Officer's should make a note in the trainee's Qualification Record book to record the change in training requirement.

The NDC and the Board are committed to ensure as far as possible that any training should be carried out as safely as possible and incidents should not happen as a result of training. A risk assessment should take place before any training activity in order to minimise potential risk.

The FAQ show opposite, answer a number of questions that have been raised in relation to the above notice.

If you have any additional questions regarding this change, please contact your Branch Diving Officer or Regional Coach in the first instance.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BUDDY BREATHING (SHARED) ASCENTS

Q *Please define precisely what constitutes a 'Shared Ascent' as opposed to an 'Assisted Ascent'*

A A 'Shared Ascent' is where two divers ascend whilst buddy breathing from the same regulator. An 'Assisted Ascent' is where two divers ascend whilst breathing from separate regulators.

Q *Why is this being changed again? Wasn't there a vote a couple of years ago to get rid of shared ascents?*

A In June 2006, the buddy breathing (shared) ascent was temporarily suspended from the training schedule pending ratification at the Diving Officers conference in November of that year. The vote at the DOs conference to remove the skill did not meet the two-thirds majority required by the former Constitution, and as a result, the training was re-instated. The new Byelaws now remove the requirement for a vote at the DO conference and for recommendations to be made directly to the Board.

The Board and NDC believe that buddy breathing (shared) ascents are still a viable means of an emergency ascent for those trained in that skill. However, diving equipment has evolved and progressed over recent years, and since the buddy breathing ascent was added to the training schedule the use of Alternative Air Sources has increased to the point where it is now the norm to use one. As a result, the Board and NDC believe that the buddy breathing (shared) ascent is now no longer essential in the training of new divers/Members.

Q *Why has it taken so long for this proposal to be re-presented?*

A The Board and NDC has been aware of the strength of feeling towards this particular skill for sometime. In order to ensure that a balanced and comprehensive proposal is presented to the Board, the NDC must ensure that proper consideration is given to all possible alternatives before coming to a conclusion.

Q *Why is ScotSAC making the carrying of an alternative air source (or equivalent) mandatory for all Members?*

A ScotSAC has for some time, strongly recommended that all divers carry an alternative air source (or equivalent) whilst diving – this ensures that in the event of an out of air situation, both divers in the buddy pair have access to an air source.

As the buddy breathing (shared) ascent is now being removed from the training schedule, we must ensure that diving carried out under ScotSAC regulations meets the minimum safety requirements and all divers are suitably equipped for emergencies. Therefore, the carrying of an alternative air source will become one of SSAC's minimum safety requirements.

Q *What constitutes an Alternative Air Source (or equivalent)?*

A An alternative air source in its most basic form consists of an additional second stage regulator attached to the diver's first stage. This may be referred to as an Octopus regulator. Equivalent alternatives may include;

- > An Air II/AutoAir – a type of inflation device for a BCD which also allows the diver to breathe from their cylinder
- > A Pony Bottle with separate first and second stage regulators
- > A twin set configuration with separate first and second stage regulators.

Q *When must I have an Alternative Air Source (or equivalent) in place?*

A An alternative air source (or equivalent) will be mandatory for all Members from the AGM in spring 2009. This provides time for Members to make any required changes to their equipment. In the meantime, the Board and NDC would like to encourage all Members to obtain an alternative air source as soon as practicable prior to that date. An AAS has already been required for Sport and Master Diver trainees for many years.

Q *How much is an Alternative Air Source likely to cost me?*

A A second stage regulator is the minimum requirement that you would need. Depending on the type/brand of regulator purchased, a brand new regulator will cost from £60.00.

Q *What happens if I do not acquire an Alternative Air Source (or equivalent)?*

A ScotSAC believes that all Members will understand the reasons why Alternative Air Sources are being made mandatory, and will rely on Members own endeavours to ensure that they obtain this additional item of equipment within the stated timescale.

As per existing ScotSAC regulations, Branch diving practices will continue to remain under the control of the Branch Diving Officer, and it will be his/her responsibility to ensure that dives are carried out in accordance with ScotSAC regulations.

Q *I've never been trained in the use of an Alternative Air Source (or equivalent). What should I do?*

A If you have never received training in the use of an Alternative Air Source, or have not completed the Assisted Ascents please consult with your Branch Diving Officer or Regional Coach in the first instance or to receive training.

Q *What is a Risk Assessment and how do I carry one out?*

A A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, on a dive site, could cause harm to anyone, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. This is an important step that should be undertaken before each dive. A risk assessment helps you to focus on the risks that matter on a dive site – the ones with potential to cause real harm. Some examples would be, entry/exit hazards, the skill set of divers on site and the dive conditions and ensuring all divers have adequate air content, including reserve for the planned dive.

There are many different methods that can be used to carry out a risk assessment and the ScotSAC Health and Safety manual provides information on some of these methods. Alternatively, you could discuss this with your Branch Diving Officer or Regional Coach.

Q *What will happen at the next AGM?*

A At the next ScotSAC AGM, the Membership will be asked to ratify this change, the outcome of which will result in the skill either being re-instated or permanently removed. Under our new Byelaws, a simple majority will be required for change to be ratified.

Q *Are Sport Diver trainees able to purchase pony bottles / twinsets for their Assisted Ascent training?*

A Although pony bottles and twin-sets are an accepted alternative to an Octopus, whilst in training the Board and NDC recommends that Sport Diver trainees keep to the more simpler equipment configurations.